

Includes Funding for VA in National Health Service Corps, a Key Braley Effort

Washington, DC-Congressman Bruce Braley (D-Iowa) voted today to pass the *Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act*

, a bill that provides

support for family who care for disabled veterans, enhances health services for 1.8 million women veterans, expands mental health services and access to care in rural areas and relieves financial burdens for veterans who are catastrophically disabled. The legislation passed today includes a key provision, championed by Braley in the House, to include Veterans Administration facilities in the National Health Service Corps.

"In my office there is no higher priority than helping veterans and military families receive the compensation, benefits, and other services they have earned," Braley said. "I'm proud that the bill we passed today includes language reflective of the *Veterans Access to Care Act*, a bill I introduced to make VA facilities eligible for National Health Service Corps funding.

The VA is facing an increased and unprecedented demand for medical services today as aging World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War veterans require more medical care and thousands of veterans are returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan with serious physical and mental health needs.

"These key provisions in the *Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act* will allow the VA to recruit more qualified mental health professionals, doctors, dentists and nurses to treat our nation's veterans by competing for National Health Service Corps funding and ensuring our veterans have access to the care they have not only earned, but also the high-quality care they deserve."

The legislation passed today will direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to transfer \$20 million to the Department of Health and Human Services to include facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs on the list of facilities eligible for assignment of participants in the National Health Service Corps Scholarship Program.

Additionally, the *Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act* will provide support services to family and other caregivers of veterans, including health care and a stipend for caregivers living with severely wounded veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, education about how to be a better caregiver, counseling and mental health services and respite care for family and other caregivers.

The bill also improves health care for veterans living in rural areas by expanding transportation for veterans to local VA hospitals and clinics through VA grants to local Veterans Service Organizations and expands VA health care services for women, providing up to seven days of care for newborn children and enhancing treatment for victims of sexual trauma.